



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office of the Secretary

Press Service



AGRIOGRAMS FROM THE UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

SPECIAL TO RADIO BROADCASTING STATIONS:

NOT TO BE RELEASED BEFORE MONDAY, APRIL 6, 1925:

TWENTY FIVE MILLION CATS populate the United States, says the United States Department of Agriculture, and indirectly they are an economic liability to the farmer. The old house cat makes great inroads on the bird life of the country and in so doing reduces one of the best allies of the farmer in his war against insects and grubs. The birds should be protected. Years ago the depredations of the cat on birds caused little concern, but now that cats have become so numerous in the United States, people are waking up to the increasing necessity of protecting birds against them. It is not necessary that householders part with their pets, but these potential bird destroyers should be kept from unduly increasing if the effort to prevent them from killing the insectivorous birds is to be made more effective. During the nesting season especially, watchful care is needed, particularly at the time when the fledglings, unable to make full use of their undeveloped wings, flutter to the ground. The sight of helpless young birds hopping across the lawn excites the predatory instinct of even a well-fed house cat. In a short time the wings of these birds will have grown strong enough for them to fly a little way, when the danger of being caught is lessened. Until the young birds can look out for themselves, the cat should not be allowed to leave the house, unless closely watched. Everyone who realizes the incalculable number of insects which even one bird will destroy in a season should be willing to take some pains to protect these charming and useful little aerial allies of the farmer and orchardist, says the department. Insects cause an annual loss of \$800,000,000 to the agricultural interests of the United States. Birds are a great help in reducing this loss.

SPRING TIME IS DRESS-UP TIME for all Nature's plant life. The unfolding leaves of green and the bursting blossoms of many colors manifest Nature's desire to start the season with freshness. Man follows Nature's lead in the matter by applying paint to the weathered buildings emerging from their winter's toil and gives them, not only new beauty but new life for another season by adding a coat of paint. The chief purpose of paint on the farm, says the United States Department of Agriculture, although it adds greatly to the appearance of a building, is to preserve houses, barns, and implements. Interior painting is usually done to improve the looks of the home and make it more attractive, but it also serves a useful purpose in making walls and ceilings more sanitary and dark rooms lighter. The importance of painting has grown as the increasing cost of building materials has made it necessary to replace with less durable materials the wood and metal formerly used. Painting at regular intervals is the cheapest way to keep buildings and implements in good condition. Painting should not be put off too long. If wood has begun to rot or iron has begun to rust, the rotting and rusting will continue after the paint has been applied. Moreover, the longer the painting is delayed, the more difficult and expensive it becomes.

FORECASTERS ARE NUMEROUS in the Department of Agriculture and they apply their efforts to many lines of futuristic fortune telling. One of the very important activities in this work is that of the "boll weevil" estimators, who aim to determine the probable competition the southern cotton farmer may expect from the boll weevil. Tons and tons of spanish moss, which is the winter home of the weevils, are gathered and searched for the weevils that have made their winter home in the moss. The percentage of live weevils which has successfully lived through the winter is used as a basis for calculations on what the farmer may expect. He can then base his planting operations on this information. So important are these forecasts that the cotton market is influenced by their publication.

ONE OF THE KEY PLACES in the house for step-saving arrangements is the wall between dining room and kitchen. Whether in remodeling an old house or building a new one, plan to make this wall do double duty if possible, suggests the United States Department of Agriculture. A two-way cupboard flanked by a built-in sideboard on the dining room side and a sink with double drainboards on the kitchen side is an ideal feature, especially for the woman who does her own work.

The pass closet has a Dutch door on the dining room side. This makes it possible to shut off the lower part, where are stored electric toaster and other pieces of equipment used only occasionally in the dining room, while the upper part is open for the frequent passage of food and dishes to and from the kitchen. Though china and glass in frequent use are kept on the upper shelves, be sure to leave a "fairway" so as to make passing quick and easy.

On the kitchen side, soiled dishes are scraped and stacked on the drainboard adjoining the pass cupboard. They are then lifted directly into the sink for washing, drained in a wire basket on the other board, the basket is lifted to the board in front of the cupboard, and the clean dishes replaced for the next meal. All this is accomplished within the space of a few square feet.

See to it also that the sink is placed high enough so that the dishwasher can seat herself comfortably on a stool or can stand erect without bending into a back-breaking position. All up-to-date factory equipment is placed at convenient height for the workers. Why shouldn't the sink and other working surfaces in the kitchen be adjusted with equal care? A shelf over the sink for the double boiler, coffee pot, and other utensils that are filled with water before they are put on the stove is still another step-saver. The kitchen and the dining room are the working center of the house, but no modern American homemaker wants to spend all her time there. Study to make this center convenient so that steps and time used there can be cut to the minimum without slighting the necessary work.